CHAPTER 1

FUNDAMENTALS OF CLOSE COMBAT

This chapter describes all techniques for a right-handed person. However, all techniques can be executed from either side.

The Marine is depicted in camouflage utilities. The opponent is depicted without camouflage.

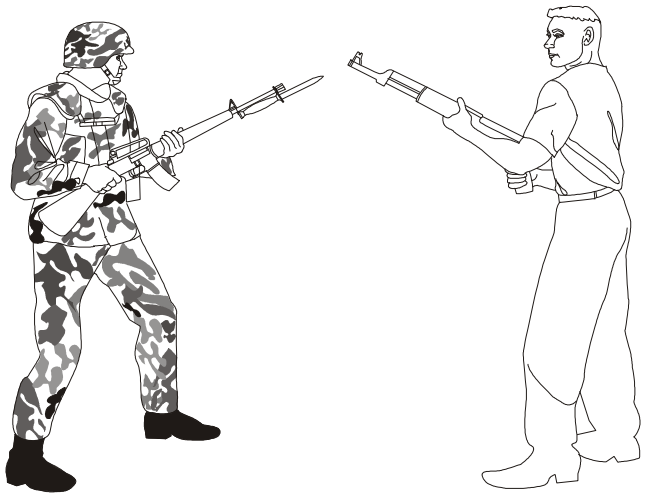
The fundamentals of close combat include ranges, weapons of the body, target areas of the body, and pressure points of the body. These fundamentals form the basis for all close combat techniques. They provide Marines with a common framework regardless of the type of confrontation or the techniques used. If Marines apply these fundamentals properly in a close combat situation, they may save their lives or the lives of fellow Marines.

1. Ranges of Close Combat

Close combat engagements occur within three ranges: long range, midrange, and close range. During any engagement, these ranges may blur together or may rapidly transition from one to another until either the opponent is defeated or the conflict is resolved.

Long Range

During long range engagements, combatants engage each other with rifles, bayonets, sticks, or entrenching tools. See figure below.



Midrange

During midrange engagements, combatants engage each other with knives, punches, or kicks.

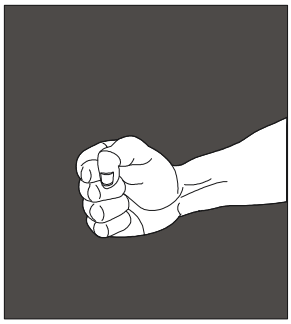
Close Range

During close range engagements, combatants grab each other. Close range engagements also involve elbow strikes, knee strikes, and grappling.

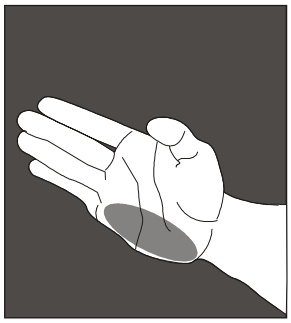
2. Weapons of the Body

Hands and Arms

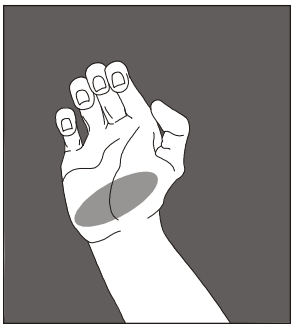
The hands, forearms, and elbows are the arm's individual weapons. The hands consist of several areas that can be used as weapons: fists, edges of hands, palms, and fingers.



Fists. To minimize injury to the fists, Marines use their fists as weapons to target soft tissue areas such as the throat. The fists' striking surfaces are the first two knuckles of the hands or the meaty portions of the hands below the little fingers.



Edge of Hand. Marines use the edge of the hand (knife edge) as a weapon. Marines use the edge of the hand to strike soft tissue areas.



Palms. Because of the palm's padding, Marines use the heels of the palms to strike, parry, and/or block.

Fingers. Marines use the fingers to gouge, rip, and tear soft tissue areas (e.g., eyes, throat, groin).

Forearms. Marines use the forearms as a defensive tool to deflect or block attacks. Forearms can also be used as striking weapons to damage or break an opponent's joints and limbs. Marines sustain less self-injury when strikes are conducted

with the forearms than when strikes are conducted with fists and fingers.

Elbows. Marines use the elbows as striking weapons. Because of the short distance needed to generate power, elbows are excellent weapons for striking during the close range of close combat.

Legs

The legs are more powerful than any other weapon of the body, and they are less prone to injury when striking. The feet are protected by boots and are the preferred choice for striking.

Feet. Marines use the balls of the feet, the insteps, and the toes to kick an opponent. Marines use the cutting edge of the heels and the heels to stomp on an opponent. Marines must be wearing boots when striking with the toes.

Knees. Like elbows, knees are excellent weapons in the close range of close combat. Knee strikes are most effective while fighting close to an opponent where kicks are impractical. The opponent's groin area is an ideal target for the knee strike if he is standing upright. Knee strikes can deliver a devastating secondary attack to an opponent's face following an initial attack that caused him to bend at the waist.

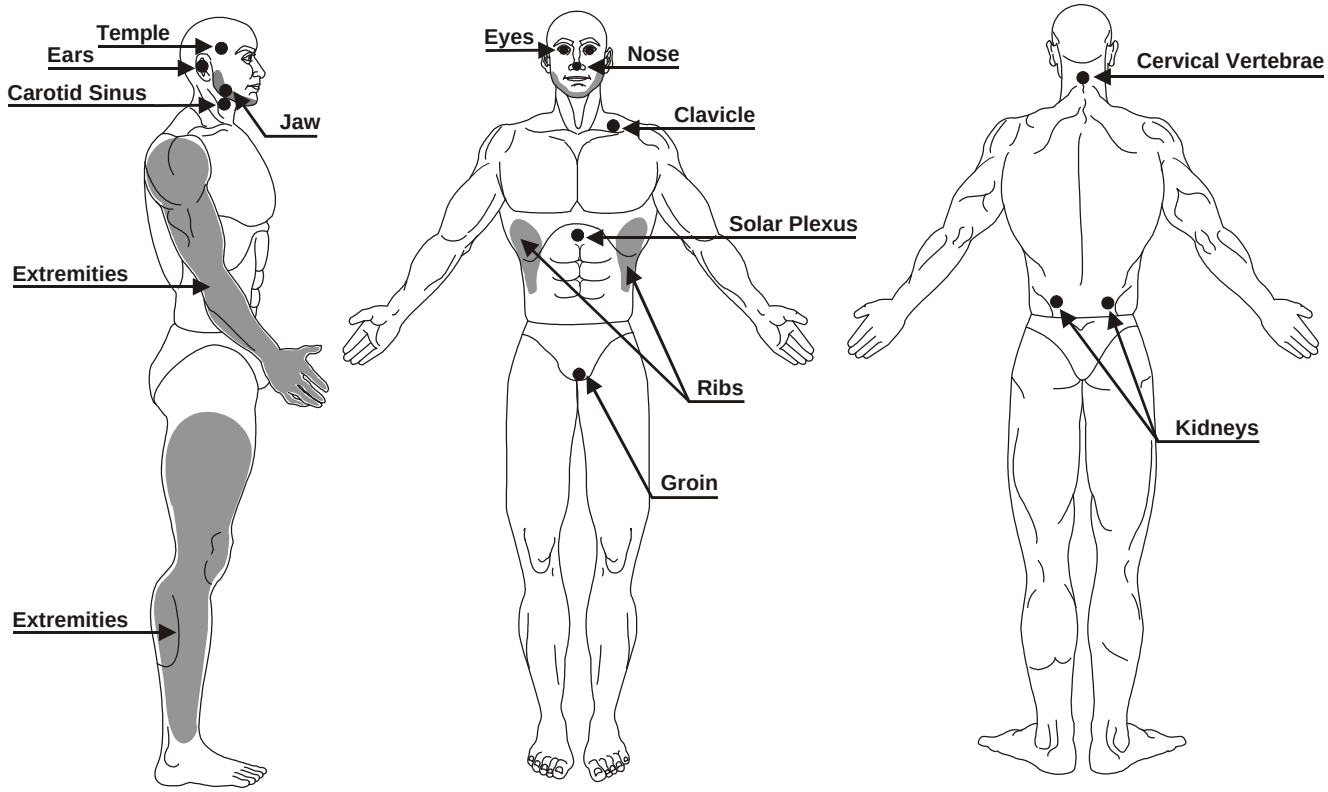
3. Target Areas of the Body

During close combat, Marines strive to attack the accessible target areas of an opponent's body. The readily accessible areas will vary with each situation and throughout the engagement. The target areas are divided into five major groups: head, neck, torso, groin, and extremities. The figure below illustrates target areas of the body.

Head

The vulnerable regions of the head are the eyes, temple, nose, ears, and jaw. Massive damage to the head kills an opponent.

Eyes. The eyes are excellent targets because they are soft tissue areas that are not protected by bone or muscle. Attacks to this area may cause the opponent to protect the area with his hands, allowing Marines to execute a secondary attack to other



target areas while the opponent uses his hands to protect his eyes.

Temple. The temple is one of the most fragile areas of the head. Powerful strikes to the opponent's temple cause permanent damage and death.

Nose. The nose is very sensitive and easily broken. An attack to this area causes involuntary watering and closing of the opponent's eyes, rendering him vulnerable to secondary attacks. However, through training, individuals can condition themselves to withstand attacks to the nose. Therefore, any attack to the nose must be powerfully delivered.

Ears. Attacks to the ears may cause the eardrum to rupture. But this may not stop or even distract an opponent unless Marines powerfully deliver the strike.

Jaw. The jaw region, when struck forcefully, renders the opponent unconscious. Strikes to the jaw cause painful injuries to the teeth and surrounding tissues (e.g., lips, tongue), but the risk of self-injury is great unless Marines deliver strikes with a hard object such as a helmet, rifle butt, or boot heel.

Neck

The front of the neck, or throat area, is a soft tissue area that is not covered by natural protection. Damage to this region causes the opponent's trachea to swell, closing his airway, which can lead to death.

Carotid Sinus. The carotid sinus is located on both sides of the neck just below the jaw. Strikes to the carotid sinus restrict blood flow to the brain, causing loss of consciousness or death.

Cervical Vertebrae. The cervical vertebrae on the back of the neck, from the base of the skull to the top of the shoulders, contains the spinal cord, which is the nervous system's link to the brain. The weight of the head and the lack of large muscle mass allow damage to the cervical vertebrae and spinal cord. Excessive damage to this area causes pain, paralysis, or death.

Torso

Clavicle. The opponent's clavicle (or collar bone) can be easily fractured, causing immobilization of the arm.

Solar Plexus. Attacks to the opponent's solar plexus or center of the chest can knock the breath out of him and immobilize him.

Ribs. Damage to the opponent's ribs immobilizes him. It may also cause internal trauma.

Kidneys. Powerful attacks to the opponent's kidneys cause immobilization, permanent damage, or death.

Groin

The groin area is another soft tissue area not covered by natural protection. Any damage to this area causes the opponent to involuntarily protect his injured area, usually with his hands or legs. In male opponents, the scrotum is the main target since even a near miss causes severe pain, contraction of the lower abdominal muscles, deterioration of his stance, and possible internal trauma.

Extremities

Rarely will an attack to the opponent's extremities (arms and legs) cause death, but they are important target areas in close combat. Damage to an opponent's joints causes immobilization.

4. Pressure Points of the Body

There are nerves in the human body that, when pressure is applied or when they are struck, allow Marines to control a subject through pain compliance. Marines use pressure points to control an opponent when deadly force is not authorized. They also use pressure points to soften or distract an opponent so a lethal or nonlethal technique can be employed. The figure on page 1-5 illustrates

the body's pressure points. Marines execute attacks to pressure points by—

- Rapidly kicking or striking pressure points.
- Slowly applying steady pressure to pressure points.

Infraorbital Nerve

The infraorbital nerve is just below the nose. Marines apply pressure to this nerve with an index finger to control the opponent.

Mastoid Process

The mastoid process is behind the base of the ear and beneath the edge of the jaw. Marines apply inward and upward pressure to this pressure point with the fingers to distract and control the opponent.

Jugular Notch

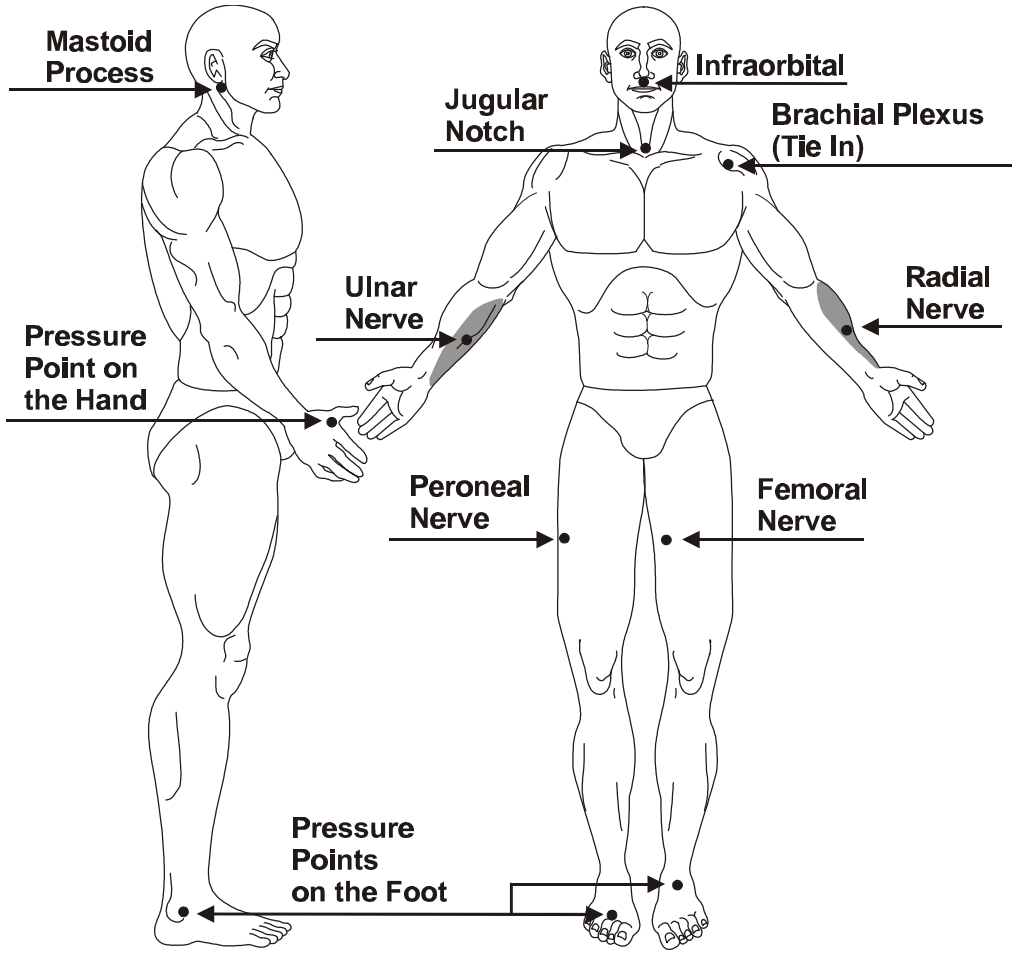
The jugular notch is at the base of the neck in the notch formed at the center of the clavicle. Marines apply pressure in a quick, stabbing motion with the index finger. Strikes to the jugular notch cause serious damage.

Brachial Plexus (Tie In)

The brachial plexus (tie in) is on the front of the shoulder at the joint. Strikes and pressure applied with the hand are effective on this nerve.

Radial Nerves

Radial nerves are on the inside of the forearms along the radius bones. Strikes and pressure applied with the hand to the radial nerve serve as a softening technique.



Ulnar Nerve

Ulnar nerves are on the outside of the forearms along the ulnar bones. Strikes and pressure applied with the hand to the ulnar nerve serve as a softening technique.

Pressure Point on the Hand

The hands contain a pressure point on the webbing between the thumbs and index fingers where the two bones of the fingers meet.

To force an opponent to soften or release his grip, Marines apply pressure with their index fingers to this pressure point or strike this pressure point with their fists.

Femoral Nerves

Femoral nerves are on the inside of the thighs along the femur bones. Strikes to the femoral nerve serve as a softening technique.

Peroneal Nerves

Peroneal nerves are on the outside of the thighs along the femur bones. Strikes to the peroneal nerve serve as a softening technique.

Pressure Points on the Feet

There are pressure points on the feet that, when pressure is applied or when they are struck, serve to soften or distract the opponent. Marines apply pressure with the toe, edge, or heel of their boots to the following points:

- The notch below the ball of the ankle.
- The top center of the foot, above the toes.
- The top of the foot where the leg and foot meet.

5. Basic Warrior Stance

Achieving a solid stance is critical to stability and movement throughout any close combat confrontation. The basic warrior stance provides the foundation for stability and movement that is needed to execute close combat techniques. To execute the basic warrior stance, Marines put their feet apart, hands up, elbows in, and chin down.

Feet Apart

Place feet shoulder-width apart.

Keep the head forward and eyes on the opponent, take a half step forward with the left foot, and pivot on the heels so the hips and shoulders are at approximately a 45-degree angle to the right.

Distribute body weight evenly on both legs. Bend the knees slightly.

Hands Up

Curl the fingers naturally into the palm of the hand. Position the thumb across the index and middle fingers. Do not clench the fists. Clenching the fists increases muscular tension in the forearms and decreases speed and reaction time.

Bring the hands up to the face at chin level, with the palms facing each other. Hold the fists up high enough to protect the head, but not so high that they block the field of vision. Ensure continuous eye contact with the opponent.

Elbows In

Tuck the elbows in close to protect the body.

Chin Down

Tuck the chin down to take advantage of the natural protection provided by the shoulders.

6. Angles of Approach and Movement

Marines use movement to control a confrontation and to retain a tactical advantage. Movement increases power and maximizes momentum. By moving around the opponent, Marines gain access to different target areas of the opponent's body. Movement allows Marines to use different weapons of the body and different close combat techniques to attack specific target areas.

Angles of Approach

Marines move anywhere within a 360-degree circle around the opponent to gain a tactical advantage. This circle provides access to different target areas of the opponent's body.

When facing an opponent, Marines move in a 45-degree angle to either side of the opponent. Moving at a 45-degree angle avoids an opponent's strike and puts Marines in the best position to attack the opponent. Marines should avoid being directly in front of an opponent during a confrontation. If a Marine is directly in front of an opponent, the opponent can rely on his forward momentum and linear power to seize the tactical advantage.

Movement

Marines must know how to move in all directions while maintaining the basic warrior stance. During any movement, the legs or feet should not be crossed. Once a movement is completed, the basic warrior stance should be resumed. Maintaining the basic warrior stance protects Marines and puts them in the proper position to launch an attack against an opponent.

Note: Before body movement begins, Marines turn their heads quickly to the new direction. The faster the head turns, the faster the body moves, and the quicker Marines attain visual contact with the opponent.

Forward to the Left. To move forward to the left from the basic warrior stance, Marines—

- Move the left foot forward at a 45-degree angle from the body (approximately 12 to 15 inches), keeping the toe pointed toward the opponent.
- Bring the right foot behind the left foot as soon as the left foot is in place. This returns Marines to the basic warrior stance.

Forward to the Right. To move forward to the right from the basic warrior stance, Marines—

- Move the right foot forward at a 45-degree angle from the body (approximately 12 to 15 inches).
- Bring the left foot, toe pointing toward the opponent, in front of the right foot as soon as the right foot is in place. This returns Marines to the basic warrior stance.

Backward to the Left. To move backward to the left from the basic warrior stance, Marines execute the forward movement in reverse. Marines—

- Move the left foot backward at a 45-degree angle from the body (approximately 12 to 15 inches), keeping the toe pointed toward the opponent.
- Bring the right foot behind the left foot as soon as the left foot is in place. This returns Marines to the basic warrior stance.

Backward to the Right. To move backward to the right from the basic warrior stance, Marines execute the forward movement in reverse. Marines—

- Move the right foot backward at a 45-degree angle from the body (approximately 12 to 15 inches).
- Bring the left foot, toe pointing toward the opponent, in front of the right foot as soon as the right foot is in place. This returns Marines to the basic warrior stance.

7. Balance and Off-Balancing

Balance

In any close combat situation, Marines must strive to maintain balance. The last place to be in a close combat situation is on the ground. Marines must maintain a strong base and a low center of balance, their feet must be a shoulder-width apart, and they must stay on their toes to enable quick movement.

Off-balancing

Marines use off-balancing techniques to control an opponent. These techniques are used to throw an opponent to the ground while Marines remain standing, or they are used to put Marines in a position for an offensive attack.

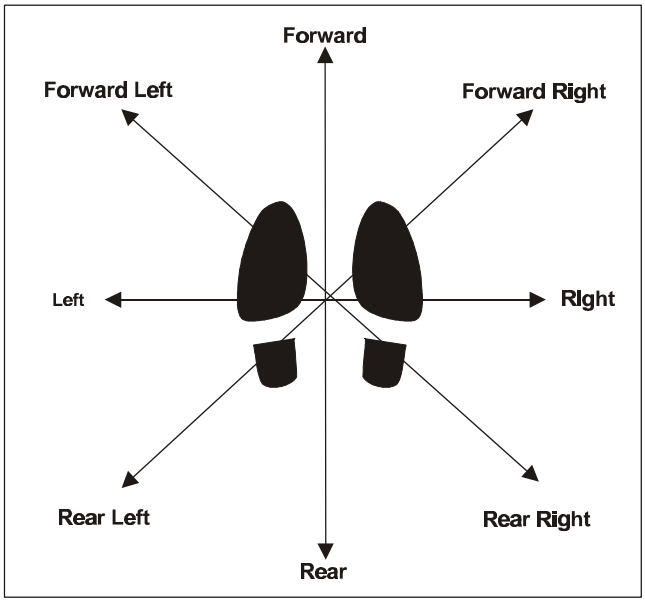
Off-balancing techniques use the opponent's momentum to move or throw him. For example, if the opponent is charging a Marine, the Marine pulls the opponent to drive him to the ground. Likewise, if the opponent is pulling a Marine, the Marine pushes the opponent to drive him to the ground.

Off-balancing techniques also rely on the power generated by the opponent. For example, during combat a Marine may be tired or outnumbered. Depending on the generated energy and momentum of the opponent, the Marine employs off-balancing techniques with very little effort and still provides effective results.

Because off-balancing techniques rely on the momentum and power generated by the opponent, these techniques are particularly effective for Marines who may be outsized by their opponent or lack their opponent's strength.

Angles of Off-balancing

There are eight angles or directions in which an opponent can be off-balanced: forward, rear, right, left, forward right, forward left, rear right, and rear left.



Note: The angles correspond to the Marine's perspective, not the opponent's. Forward, rear, right, and left are straight angles. Forward right, forward left, rear right, and rear left are considered quadrants that are at a 45-degree angle in either direction to the front or rear.

Off-balancing Techniques

Marines off-balance an opponent by pushing, pulling, or bumping the opponent with their hands, arms, or bodies.

To pull, Marines grab an opponent with their hands and drive him forcefully to one of the rear quadrants or to the right or left.

To push, Marines grab the opponent with their hands and drive him forcefully into one of the front quadrants or to the right or left.

Marines execute bumping in the same manner as pushing, but use their shoulders, hips, and legs instead of their hands to off-balance the opponent.

8. Falls

Marines may lose their balance or be thrown to the ground during encounters with an opponent. Marines use falling techniques to absorb the impact of a fall and to quickly return to their feet following an opponent's attack.

Whether falling or being thrown by an opponent, Marines strive to reduce the force of the impact, to prevent serious personal injury, and to increase the chances of survival. Falling techniques use the body's large muscles (back, thighs, buttocks) to protect vital organs and bones from injury and immobilization.

Front Fall

Marines execute a front fall to break a fall on the front. To execute the front fall, Marines—

Bend the elbows and place the palms facing out in a position to spread and absorb the impact of the fall.

Fall forward, breaking the fall with the forearms and palms. The forearms and hands, down to the fingertips, should strike the ground simultaneously.

Offer resistance with the forearms and hands to keep the head raised off the ground.

Side Fall

Marines execute a side fall to break a fall on the side. To execute the side fall, Marines—

Bring the right arm across the body so the hand is next to the left shoulder with the palm facing inboard.

Fall to the side, breaking the fall with the right arm by slapping the ground and making contact from the shoulder or forearm down to the hand. At the same time, tuck the chin and keep the head

raised off the ground. The chin should be tucked to the chest at all times to prevent whiplash.

Stretch the right leg out to make contact with the ground and to distribute and absorb the impact. Bend the left leg, allowing the foot to make contact with the ground.

Back Fall

Marines execute a back fall to break the fall when being thrown or falling backward. To execute the back fall, Marines—

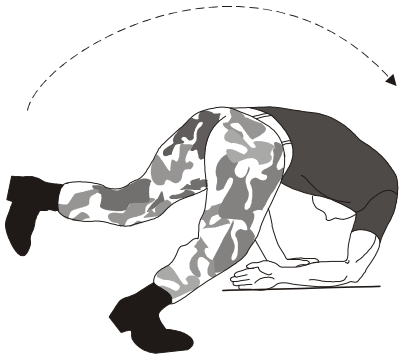
Cross the hands in front of the chest and tuck the chin.

Fall backward and slap the ground with the forearms and hands to absorb the impact of the fall and keep the head off the ground.

Forward Shoulder Roll

Marines use the forward shoulder roll to break a fall from an opponent's attack and to use the momentum of the fall to get back on their feet quickly. Ideally, Marines execute the forward shoulder roll to a standing position so they can continue fighting. To execute the forward shoulder roll, Marines—

Contact the ground with the back of the right forearm and upper arm. Tuck the chin into the chest.



Roll onto the right shoulder, rolling diagonally across the back to land on the left hip.

Slap the ground with the left arm, absorbing the impact from the shoulder to the hand, palm down.

Keep the left leg straight to absorb as much of the impact as possible. The right leg is bent and the foot hits flat on the ground.

Bend the left leg upon impact to push off with the left knee and leg to a squatting and then a standing position. Forward momentum should carry the Marine to a standing position.

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